



Republican Policy Committee

Don Nickles, Chairman Doug Badger, Staff Director 347 Russell Senate Office Building (202)224-2946
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Clinton Administration Ready to Send U.S. Troops to Bosnia

"These are combat forces that are going in there."
Secretary of Defense William Perry, *Chicago Tribune*, 9/15/95

As early as 1993, President Clinton pledged to send up to 25,000 U.S. troops to the former Yugoslavia to monitor and implement a peace accord, when one was concluded. So if Secretary of Defense William Perry's "cautious optimism" — that a peace agreement is possible "by the end of the year" holds true — thousands of U.S. troops could be on their way to Bosnia-Herzegovina within the next few months, if not sooner.

The United States, along with our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, are preparing the military plan for the international force. The number and make up of the force is yet uncertain and will largely depend on the details of the peace accord. However, according to Administration officials, U.S. troops will play "a leading role" in policing a peace accord, with U.S. forces comprising about one half of any international force.

Issues for Consideration

The decision to send U.S. troops to any region warrants Congressional scrutiny. The Clinton Administration's willingness to send U.S. troops to implement a peace agreement in Bosnia raises a number of significant issues for Congressional consideration, which include:

- Identifying the U.S. national security interests that are at stake;
- Determining the number of troops to be deployed, how long they will stay and conditions for withdrawal;
- Defining the mission, rules of engagement, and command structure;
- Allowing Russian participation in the peacekeeping operation;
- Understanding how such deployment will impact the U.S. military's ability to fulfill other national security objectives (e.g., the ability to fight two nearly-simultaneous major regional conflicts, as identified by the Clinton Administration);
- Analyzing the implications of troop deployment upon current policies toward Bosnia, (including: U.S. participation in enforcing No-Fly Zone; impact on the Administration's arms embargo policy);
- Paying for the military operation; and,
- Ensuring Congressional participation (e.g., from consultation to authorization).

Vital National Security Interests Questioned

The first question that must be asked before the United States commits combat troops overseas is whether vital U.S. interests are at stake. Thus far, the Clinton Administration has failed to make the case that vital American national interests are at stake and warrant the deployment of U.S. combat troops to Bosnia.

Instead, the Clinton Administration's rationale for sending U.S. troops to Bosnia is to preserve U.S. leadership in NATO. As General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) recently: "We, as the leaders of that alliance, cannot step away from the alliance when they are then asked to go in and perform what I think will be a very challenging task." [SASC, JCS Chairman's Re-confirmation Hearing, 9/21/95]

For Clinton officials to claim U.S. military participation is needed to maintain a U.S. leadership role in NATO is almost laughable, given this Administration's two-year record of flips and flops on policies towards the former Yugoslavia. And, the President's willingness to relinquish exclusive control over NATO airstrikes by setting up a dual-command structure allowing U.N. civilian officials to veto NATO air operations has essentially subordinated the world's strongest military alliance to U.N. bureaucrats.

As in the case of Haiti, President Clinton has failed to make the case that U.S. troops are needed to protect vital U.S. national security interests in Bosnia. After 18 U.S. Army Rangers lost their lives in Somalia, (when the Clinton Administration expanded the U.S. mission from feeding the starving to war with Mohammed Aideed and nation-building), officials vowed a change in U.S. participation in future peacekeeping operations. However, President Clinton's willingness to send U.S. troops to Bosnia to implement a peace agreement is breathing new life into a policy that dates back to a time when U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright told a congressional committee that the Administration was considering a plan giving the United Nations a "military capability" so it could quickly tackle peacekeeping operations. [Washington Post, 5/4/93, p. A1]

Number of Troops To Be Deployed And Length of Stay

Despite the Administration's failure to identify vital U.S. interests warranting U.S. combat troops in Bosnia, preparations are underway for such a deployment. But top officials cannot even agree on the number of troops that should be sent to Bosnia.

According to press reports, General Shalikashvili and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake are arguing for 25,000 soldiers so that U.S. forces "are robust enough to take care of themselves . . . so they don't get pushed around like UNPROFOR (the U.N. peacekeepers) has been pushed around." [General Shalikashvili, Re-confirmation Hearing, 9/21/95] This begs the question: why is such a robust force needed unless the Administration assumes peace will break down?

On the other hand, Defense Secretary William Perry and Secretary of State Warren Christopher have stated that fewer than 25,000 troops should be deployed since, according to Christopher, "this is a much different time, a much different map, a much different set of

requirements" [than those outlined in the Vance/Owen peace plan several years ago]. [USA Today, 9/19/95]

Secretary of Defense Perry recently put the number somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000. According to Perry, the purpose of the force is to deal with the "what if — what if the peace agreement does not stick, and there is an upsurge in fighting. We want the force to be large enough and powerful enough, first of all, to deter that kind of action, and secondly, if that happens, to win it quickly, decisively and with minimum casualties." [Chicago Tribune, 9/15/95, p. 19]

While to a large degree, the number of troops required will be dependent on the terms of the peace accord, the fact that the Administration does not hold a unified position on such a critical issue is of particular concern.

Of equal concern is how long U.S. troops will remain in Bosnia. According to a press report, the "exit strategy" currently being discussed among Administration officials and NATO allies is to begin withdrawing some troops six to eight months after their original deployment. But what about the rest of the troops? And how many are some?

Admiral Leighton Smith, NATO Commander in Southern Europe, and his senior staff are reportedly able and ready to provide a NATO peacekeeping force if asked but raise the question: "Have you bought Cyprus? The whole . . . thing is a nightmare Clearly you've taken the first step on the slippery slope toward being there forever." [Washington Post, 9/18/95, p. 33; Note: U.N. peacekeepers have been deployed in Cyprus since 1964].

It is critical for the Administration to set out the conditions for withdrawal prior to deployment. Is the Administration intent on maintaining a U.S. presence in Bosnia indefinitely and if so, at what level? Of course, having troops return home after six to eight months, once a Presidential campaign is in full swing may be good for politics. However, the Administration has yet to say how this time frame correlates to achieving the goals of the deployment.

Mission, Rules of Engagement, and Command Structure

Before U.S. troops are committed to Bosnia, the Administration must determine the mission and specific objectives to be achieved. In a war, the mission and objective is clear: to fight and win with the smallest number of casualties. However, in a "peacekeeping" mission such as the one envisioned for Bosnia, the missions and objectives could range from deterring and defending against any re-initiation of hostilities, to providing humanitarian and refugee assistance. Each mission carries equal risk for a soldier. A specific, defined and limited objective is absolutely necessary to avoid dreaded "mission creep."

These very concerns were expressed recently by Admiral Smith, "The question is, what is it you want me to do? Do you want me to separate the factions? Do I need to be concerned with humanitarian aid? Do I need to be concerned with refugees? Do I need to be in there to impose conditions or to ensure conditions are upheld? What we all fear is that we'll get in there and suddenly the mission will change. Then you get into a whole new ball

of wax where, sorry, guys, we're not going to be home for Christmas [of 1996]. Maybe Easter." [*Washington Post*, 8/18/95, p. 33].

If U.S. troops are deployed to Bosnia, at the very least they should be under NATO rules of engagement, not the more restrictive U.N. rules that only allow a soldier to shoot once shot at. Administration officials have stated in the past that U.S. soldiers would use NATO rules of engagement. Yet equally important is under whose command these forces would serve. Once again, the Administration vowed in the past that U.S. troops would serve under NATO, not U.N. command.

However, to complicate matters, Clinton officials are also considering setting up a "dual-force" structure to allow Russian participation in the peacekeeping operation. According to the *Washington Post*, NATO commanders would retain sole operational authority but Russia and non-NATO countries would be linked to that command through an intermediary, possibly the United Nations. Specifically, one plan being discussed is to have two forces, one all-NATO and the other to include non-NATO forces, with a U.N. official acting as an overall adviser but both forces being under NATO's operational control. [*Washington Post*, 9/21/95, p. A24]. The problems arising from such a complex configuration will likely be legion.

And Russia's envoy to NATO, Vitaly Churkin, recently stated his belief that Russia would not put its troops under NATO command. Instead, President Boris Yeltsin reportedly supports carrying out peacekeeping operations by specially created joint peacekeeping forces of NATO and Russian troops "to be commanded in turn by a NATO general for some time then by a Russian general for some time" [Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Europe Daily Report, *INTERFAX*, 9/26/95, p. 41].

The Role of Russia

Recognizing that Russian participation would be required for any long-term peace agreement in the Balkans, NATO and U.S. officials are discussing how many and where Russian forces could be deployed in the former Yugoslavia. While currently there are about 1,000 Russian troops stationed in Croatia as part of the U.N. peacekeeping force there, Russia has not yet committed to sending troops for the purpose of implementing a peace accord. Furthermore, extensive NATO bombing campaigns targeting Serb strongholds complicates matters, leaving little incentive for Russia, the Serbs' traditional ally, to cooperate with NATO on NATO's terms.

Another concern that warrants attention is what concessions NATO, and especially the United States, is willing to grant Russia for their participation in implementing the accord. For instance, what would the United States do if Russia demanded a change in American policy toward NATO expansion in return for contributing forces to the international peacekeeping force?

Impact On U.S. Force Structure and Mission

Since the Clinton Administration is contemplating sending up to 25,000 U.S. soldiers to the Balkans, a legitimate concern is how such deployment will impact the conduct of other U.S. military operations that may be necessary to protect vital U.S. interests. Would the U.S. military be stretched too thin if 25,000 troops are sent to Bosnia for an extended period of time? In 1994, Army General George A. Joulwan told the Senate Armed Services Committee that dispatching one division to Bosnia (roughly 20,000 troops) and committing another to replace it would not allow the military to also accommodate two major regional contingencies nearly simultaneously, as envisioned by the Administration's own national strategy.

[*European Stars and Stripes*, 3/4/94, p. 1]

At the same hearing, Marine Corps General Joseph P. Hoar, Chief of Central Command also highlighted concerns over the impact on readiness of sending U.S. troops on peacekeeping missions: "It's very much a zero-sum game. When you're doing humanitarian operations, you can't train for other things While it may be true that some humanitarian operations have intrinsic training value, in many cases it comes, as General Joulwan stated, at the expense of fundamental, basic training for war." [*European Stars and Stripes*, 3/4/94, p.1]

Also, the Clinton Administration's plan to send U.S. troops to enforce a peace agreement in the Balkans can be viewed as taking another step away from the U.S. military's core mission — defending the United States.

Implications for Current Policies Regarding U.S. Relations With Bosnia

Before any troops are committed to Bosnia, the Administration must deal with how such deployment will impact current policies. For instance, one could assume that NATO will still be on-call to enforce any violation of the No Fly Zone and ready to resume airstrikes should the peace agreement crumble. But under what conditions will the resort to such use of airpower be approved not only by NATO, but by the U.N.? And if airstrikes are required, will there still be a dual command structure requiring U.N. approval, as established by NATO and the U.N. in early 1994?

Some would argue that instead of sending U.S. troops to monitor a peace agreement, a better alternative would be for the Clinton Administration to lift the arms embargo. While the Administration has been adamantly opposed to a unilateral lift, once U.S. troops are on the ground in Bosnia, lifting the embargo becomes even more problematic.

Cost of the Operation

Prior to sending U.S. troops to Bosnia, Congress must have a full estimate of how much such deployment will cost. The Administration should provide estimates of both the military operation and the peacekeeping activities the U.S. will be expected to conduct (such as possible humanitarian and refugee assistance, rebuilding the war-torn region, or keeping NATO air assets ready for deployment should the peace accord crumble).

Press accounts report that Administration officials are estimating the cost of deploying U.S. troops to Bosnia at \$1 billion or more. In addition, the U.S. could contribute \$500

million over several years during peace negotiations to a Balkans reconstruction fund.
[*Washington Post*, 9/28/95, p. A24]

The Administration must further identify at the outset the accounts and budgets that will pay for the deployment. Already, the Pentagon has estimated that for FY 1996 the cost of U.S. military participation in peacekeeping activities (Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, etc.) will reach \$1.2 billion. These figures do not include the cost of deploying U.S. soldiers to Bosnia to implement a peace accord. The Clinton Administration has traditionally sought Department of Defense funds to pay for these "ongoing operations" while, at the same time, cutting drastically the defense budget. And this is an Administration that may refuse to sign this year's military spending bill because Republicans have tried to protect the defense budget from Clinton's cuts.

Congress' Role

The Clinton Administration has sent U.S. troops to Haiti, and expanded the mission of U.S. troops in Somalia, without seeking or receiving authorization from Congress. In October 1993, following the death of 18 U.S. Army Rangers in Somalia, the Senate passed an amendment to the FY 1994 DoD Appropriations bill, sponsored by Senator Robert Byrd, that cut off funds for a continued U.S. military presence in Somalia beyond March 31, 1994.

Regarding Bosnia, during consideration of that same bill, the Senate passed a sense of Congress amendment that no funds should be made available to deploy U.S. armed forces to participate in the implementation of a peace settlement in Bosnia unless previously authorized by Congress. Another provision on the same bill opposed U.S. participation in any peacekeeping or peace-enforcing operations unless "the President initiates consultations with the bipartisan leadership of Congress" [Senator Robert Dole, *Congressional Record*, 9/26/95, p. S14271].

President Clinton has not yet stated whether Congressional authorization will be sought before U.S. troops are deployed to Bosnia. On September 27, 1995, when asked if the Administration needed Congress' approval, Secretary of State Warren Christopher replied, "Yes, we want Congress's approval. We'll consult very closely with them.... Yes, we do [need Congress' approval]. They certainly will have to provide the money" [NBC, *Today Show*, 9/27/95].

And the Administration has yet to even consult with Congress on the components of the peace agreement, let alone on the plan that is currently being devised for sending U.S. ground forces to Bosnia. Secretary Christopher defended the lack of communication with Congress in this way: "But let's not get the cart before the horse. Let's get a peace agreement and then we'll worry about the implementation" [NBC, *Today Show*, 9/27/95].

Secretary Christopher's comments skirt over an important point: in trying to conclude a peace agreement, the Administration could be making promises Congress may be unwilling to support. By following such a course, the Administration will be handing Congress a fait accompli, rendering irrelevant any advice Congress could offer. Worse yet, the Administration then would be in a position to defend its plan as is by charging that any

proposed changes to accommodate Congressional concerns would lead to an unraveling of the peace accord.

Senator Dole Requests Hearings

Deploying U.S. troops overseas is serious business. Thus far, while the Clinton Administration has pledged to send U.S. troops to Bosnia to implement a peace accord, should one be reached, it has not answered a number of critical questions such a commitment raises.

On September 25, 1995, Senator Dole, together with nine other Senators, sent a letter to President Clinton outlining a series of questions the Administration must answer before the Senate can fully evaluate the Administration's proposal to send U.S. troops to Bosnia. Many of these questions have been addressed in this paper. In addition, on September 26, 1995, Senator Dole wrote to the Chairmen of the Appropriations, Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees requesting they hold extensive hearings and that the questions asked in the letter form the basis of their examination.

Staff Contact: Yvonne Bartoli, 224-2946